



City of Rockville

MEMORANDUM

May 4, 2006

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Jim Wasilak, Chief of Planning
Judy Christensen, Preservation Planner III

SUBJECT: Lincoln Park Neighborhood and Conservation Plans

The Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on the Lincoln Park Neighborhood Plan and Conservation Plan on November 16, 2005. Three speakers addressed the Commission regarding the neighborhood plan:

- Charles Haughey, member of the Board of Education, encouraged the plan to allow MCPS to redevelop their property on North Stonestreet Avenue, and suggested that the reuse of the former Lincoln High School building could be tied to the redevelopment.
- Jody Kline, attorney for Centex Homes, potential redeveloper of the MCPS property on North Stonestreet Avenue, also felt that the Plan should be more specific about the reuse of the former high school. He also stated that the plan should allow more flexibility in development options for the entire MCPS property.
- Barbara Hill-Talley of the United Black Cultural Center, one of the tenants of the former high school building, stated that her thoughts on the reuse would be shared at the upcoming public forum sponsored by MCPS on the building's reuse.
- Soo Lee-Cho, attorney for Centex Homes, potential redeveloper of the MCPS property on North Stonestreet Avenue, stated that the Plan was too specific regarding the recommended density and mix of units on the site. She agreed that there should be compatibility, and that townhouses would only be introduced where the property does not confront single family detached units. Ms. Lee-Cho also stated that Centex will move forward with their proposal without addressing the former Lincoln High School, and that structure will not be part of the future application for development.
- Anita Neal-Powell, president of the Lincoln Park Historic Foundation, expressed concerns about the public hearing notifications. She felt that the packets that were delivered to neighborhood residents were not complete, because they lacked the neighborhood plan, and that they were not delivered in a timely manner nor were they delivered to every resident. Because of this, additional packets should be sent.

The Commission also heard from two speakers during the Conservation Plan public hearing, including:

- Lucinda Hall, chair of the Lincoln Park Task Force that developed the plan, stated that she fully supported both Plans.
- Barbara Hill-Talley stated that she felt that historic designation would be preferable to a conservation district as it would be more permanent.
- Gail Koenig, resident of Ashley Avenue, expressed strong support for the conservation plan.

The Commission continued the public hearing to the December 7, 2005 meeting, with the public record for written comment to close on December 31, 2005. Due to the New Years holiday, this was extended to the next business day, January 3, 2006.

In response to the Commission's request that staff do further outreach with the Lincoln Park community at its meeting of January 11, staff undertook the following:

- Community Forum – Postcards in English and Spanish were mailed to all households in Lincoln Park. The forum was held on February 18, 2006 with good attendance. A number of questions were asked, including a four-page list from the Lincoln Park Historical Foundation (LPHF) that required research for response and was too lengthy to address in the time permitted.
- List of Questions from the LPHF: Staff drafted a response and these have been made available to the public.
- Minutes of all Neighborhood Plan Advisory Group and Community Preservation Committee meetings. As requested by Ms. Neal Powell, staff has compiled a chronology and copies of all meeting minutes from both groups. Copies of the meeting minutes are available at the Lincoln Park Community Center and on the City web site.
- Informational binder: Staff compiled an informational binder with both plans, copies of minutes and staff reports to remain at the Lincoln Park Community Center for reference.
- Public outreach: Staff sent an additional mailing to each household during the week of March 20th. It included a cover letter explaining the purpose, providing dates for the additional Planning Commission hearing date as well as for the Mayor and Council, and where to get more information, the response to the LPHF list of questions, an Executive Summary of the neighborhood plan, the Conservation plan with recommended amendments, and a comment sheet.

Staff Recommended Change to Conservation District

Staff has found that special incentives are necessary to preserve the existing one-story older homes in Lincoln Park and permit owners to build additions that increase the lot coverage past 1,200 square feet. Staff proposes that an addition on the rear of **up to** 1,000 additional square feet on one story would be permitted, not to exceed 35% lot coverage of the smallest allowable lot size of 6,000 square feet or 2,100 square feet. Houses of more than one story would be allowed lot coverage of 1,500 square feet, an addition of 300 square feet to allow for garages and outbuildings. The addition of outbuildings such as sheds or detached garages were not calculated in the original lot coverage for new houses but do contribute the maximum percentage allowed. The additional 300 square feet would allow more latitude in site development and use.

The majority of single-family houses in Lincoln Park is one story and average about 1200 square feet in size, excluding any attic or basement space. The lot coverage proposed for new construction is 1,200 square feet, or 20% of the allowable smallest lot (6,000 square feet.) A two-story house with up to 1,200 square feet on each story (2400 square feet) plus basement and attic space is compatible with the mass of most two-story houses in Lincoln Park. But 1,200 square feet of lot coverage does not address smaller one story houses built on a slab that will not support a second story, and lack the space and amenities wanted and needed by today's families. As an alternative to demolition and reconstruction, if the existing house will be maintained and improved, an addition on the rear of **up to** 1,000 additional square feet on one story would be permitted, not to exceed 35% lot coverage of the smallest allowable lot size of 6,000 square feet or 2,100 square feet.

Lincoln Park dwelling square footage from State tax data

This number represents "enclosed area," meaning all dwelling space above ground level, excluding attic story. In a one-story building, it can be considered lot coverage. For one-and-a-half or two-story houses, the actual living space would be larger than the lot coverage or footprint.

Total number surveyed – removing apartments and institutions- 193

LOT COVERAGE OF 193 HOUSES IN LINCOLN PARK

All under 1200 sq feet	1 story over 1200 square ft	1.5-2 story over 1200 sq ft
120	22	51

Of the 22 single families over 1,200 square feet, 11 are less than 1,300 square feet, three are less than 1,400 square feet, two are less than 1,500 square feet, three are less than 1,600, one is 1689 and one is 1908 square feet. See table below.

ONE STORY HOUSES

1,200 to 1,299 square feet	11
1,300 to 1,399	3

1,400 to 1,499	2
1,500 to 1,599	2
1,600 to 1,908	2

For buildings over one story, the largest one and a half story building is 2,284 square feet and the largest two-story building is 2,304 square feet. Both of these would be about 1,000 –1500 square feet in footprint and lot coverage. For most existing houses, an addition with a footprint of 700 (about 20 ft. by 35 ft.) to 900 square feet (30 ft by 30 ft) would bring the structure up to 2,100 square feet.

Attachments

1. Responses to Questions and Concerns
2. Additional Written Public Comment Received

/rjw